

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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## Bathrooms : Part IV

William F. Mennell  
District Services Manager  
San Diego Coast District

Once all the components of the modern bathroom were developed, there were still two problems: where to put them, and skilled plumbers to install them.

Most homes and hotels not having the fairly new fixtures available when they were built, had no plumbing, or a room specified as a bathroom. This was the issue that Cave Coutts Jr. faced in 1930, when renovating the Casa de Bandini/ Cosmopolitan Hotel. In order to accommodate the bathrooms, the existing guest rooms had to be significantly altered. Cout's workers reconfigured the rooms facing the courtyard, by reusing the Seeley studs, and then re-lathing and plastering the entire interior. Most of the incoming brass water lines were hidden in the newly renovated walls, but in most cases the cast iron drain lines were routed directly outside on the courtyard side, and down to connect with the clay sewer pipes. In the Mason Street wing, the drain pipes were connected by removing a two foot section down the middle of the Seeley floor in

the sala, and routing the clay sewer pipe to Calhoun Street.

Traditionally plumbers covered roofs with sheet lead as flashing, fixed and installed water tanks, built cisterns and reservoirs, installed pipes in buildings--at the time in the U.S. being either wood or possibly lead--repaired and installed pumps, and repaired the various water closets of the time. But by the 1930s, modern plumbing had arrived. In 1924, the "Recommended Minimum Requirements for Plumbing", also known as the "Hoover Code"--named for then Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover--standardized plumbing, and over 12,000 items had been removed from manufacturers catalogs. Although common on bathtubs since the 1890s,

combination faucets that merge hot water and cold water valves into a single outlet were beginning to be used on residential sinks in the 1920s. The Stilton wrench, or pipe wrench was 60 years old, and plumbers were beginning to move away from lead pipes. *The Ridge Tool Company*, makers of RIDGID tools was founded in 1922, and was quickly becoming the most popular tool maker of plumbing tools.

In San Diego the Municipal Water District was 2 years old. A sewer system administered by Special Districts was in place throughout most of the city, but no treatment plant, the sewage was piped directly into the bay. The first treatment plant wouldn't be built until 1943.

